

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity.

A ~~U7100.e.358~~

S E R M O N

Preached at

MERCERS-CHAPEL in *Cheapside*,
ON THE

Fifteenth Day of JUNE, 1742.

At the ANNIVERSARY MEETING
OF THE

G O V E R N O R S

OF THE

L O N D O N I N F I R M A R Y .

Published at the

Command of the PRESIDENT and GOVERNORS.

By MATTHEW AUDLEY,

Curate and Lecturer of *St. Mary, Rotherhith, Surrey.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BROTHERTON at the *Bible*, next *Tom's*
Coffee-House, in *Cornhill.* 1742.

A LIST OF

SEVERAL

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

To His GRACE the
Duke of *Richmond*, &c.
PRESIDENT of the
London Infirmary.

May it please Your Grace,

TO accept of this Sermon, published in
Obedience to Your Commands. The high
Honour You have done this *Charity*, in being
the *Governor*, and the very great *Influence* Your
Grace's *Example* has had, in engaging others to
become Subscribers to this Infirmary, give us a
sure Ground of Hope, that it will abundantly
answer its valuable End. And that Your Grace
may be highly rewarded both here and here-
after, is the sincere Prayer of,

May it please your Grace,

Your Grace's most obedient,

And devoted humble Servant,

M. AUDLEY.

To His Grace the
 Duke of Richmond, &c.
 PRESIDENT of the
 London Infirmary.

May it please Your Grace,
 To accept of this Sermon, published in
 Obedience to Your Commands. The high
 Honour You have done this Charity, in being
 the Governor, and the very great Assistance Your
 Grace's Example has had, in engaging others to
 become Subscribers to this Infirmary, give us a
 sure Ground of Hope, that it will abundantly
 answer its valuable End. And that Your Grace
 may be highly rewarded both here and here-
 after, is the sincere Prayer of

May it please your Grace,
 Your Grace's most obedient,
 And devoted humble servant,

M. AUDLEY.



ST. MATT. IV. 24, 25.

His Fame went throughout all Syria ; and they brought unto him all sick People that were taken with divers Diseases and Torments, and those which were possessed with Devils, and those which were Lunatick, and those which had the Palsy, and he healed them.

And there followed him great Multitudes of People from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.



IN this Chapter we find our blessed Saviour entering upon his public Ministry, and proving the Truth of his Doctrine by miraculous Works. He begins with preaching Repentance, however it might be thought unnecessary by the Seli-conceited *Pharisees*, who trusted in themselves that they were *Righteous* ; and how unlikely soever to be hearkened to by the unbelieving

unbelieving *Sadducees*, whose narrow Expectations were absolutely confined to this Life only. But as it was his Design to expose the Hypocrisy of the One, and to convince the Other of the Unreasonableness of their Unbelief, He opens his divine Commission by Miracles of Love and Goodness, and gains a favourable Attention and a due Esteem from the Multitude, by *healing all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Disease among the People.*

THE Works He wrought were not only Manifestations of his Power, but of his Goodness also, such as were beneficial to Mankind, while at the same Time they proved, that *no Man could do such Works, except God were with him.*

WORKS of Power only may raise our Astonishment and Wonder; and when the Elements are rebuked, his Disciples may be surprized, and of consequence amazedly cry out, *What Manner of Man is this, that even the Winds and the Sea obey him!* But when his Goodness is as conspicuous as his Power, by removing with a Word, the most inveterate Diseases, and curing with a Touch, the most obstinate Distempers to which Human Nature is liable, it must oblige them to conclude as the Man did who was born Blind, and restored to Sight, *that herein is a marvellous Thing, that they know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine Eyes.* And it must be an obstinate Stupidity to refuse an universal Obedience to one, whose very Action shewed a general Good-will to Mankind, and when every

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 9

every Precept He delivered was rational and proper ; His Works suited to engage the Affections of Men ; His Doctrines convincing the Understanding, *Holy, Just, and Good.*

AND there is no Question but his thus shewing himself so distinguished a Friend to the World, greatly contributed to spread his Name, not only over all *Palestine*, to whom alone he was sent, but also throughout all *Syria*, a Gentile People living upon the Confines of *Palestine*, but much abounding with Profelytes of either Sort. *His Fame*, says the Text, *went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto him all sick People, that were taken with divers Diseases and Torments, and those which were possessed with Devils, and those which were Lunatick, and those which had the Palsy, and he healed them. And there followed him great Multitudes of People*, to be cured of their different Maladies, as well as to hear what so divine a Person had to say, *from Galilee and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.*

AND as these Acts of Tenderness and Compassion for the Miseries of Mankind, were so affectionately received in all Places which the Saviour of the World condescended to honour with his Presence, in all Probability it was the real Value such a Temper would be of to the Persons he was concerned to instruct and put into the Paths of Happiness, which moved him to seal his Commission from Heaven, in this gracious and benevolent

10 *The Duty of Benevolence and Charity.*

nevolent Manner. So that He may be consider'd both as publishing his just Claim to be received as the Guide and Guardian of Mankind, and at the same Time, pointing out the principal Branch of Christian Duty; which was to be the Step by which they were to gain that Happiness. For He who *was both perfect God and perfect Man, and needed not to be told what was in Man*, wisely took this Method of *Beneficial* Miracles amongst other Reasons, to establish the Duty which he afterwards made the Characterestick of his Disciples. And this naturally leads us to some Reflections upon *Benevolence* and *Charity* in general, and of this particular Species of it, which is the Occasion of our present Meeting.

AND in Regard to general Benevolence and Charity, I shall

First, Consider the Duty, as the Foundation of it is laid in the Frame and Constitution of Human Nature. And,

Second, As a principal Doctrine of Christianity, and the distinguishing Mark of our Holy Profession.

First then, I am to consider the Duty, as the Foundation of it is laid in the Frame and Constitution of Human Nature.

THIS

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 11

THIS appears plainly, in that we are all Partakers of the same Nature, all subject to the same Infirmities, expos'd to the same Accidents and Calamities, and liable to the same Distempers and Uneasinesses, both of Body and Mind. We ought therefore to do what in us lies to lessen the Number and weaken the Force of them, where-ever they chance to light. *Hide not thyself from thine own Flesh*, is a Duty of *natural*, as well as of *revealed* Religion. 'Tis what the common Ties of Humanity bind us to the Performance of, so that as we are Men, we cannot think any Thing that happens to Men, to be of no Concern to us. The general Principles of Pity and Compassion, kindle in our Breasts a brotherly Love and Affection for each other, and *our being Members one of another*, is a powerful Inducement to the *Remembrance of those who suffer Adversity*.

THIS Nature teaches us; and God by implanting in us a passionate Desire of helping others, and an Uneasiness for their Sufferings, strongly inclines us to. For there is something in human Nature resulting from our very Make and Constitution, while it retains its genuine Form, and is not alter'd by vicious Habits, not perverted by Transports of Revenge or Fury, by Ambition or bad Company, nor oppress'd by Stupidity, and neglecting to observe what happens to others; something, I say, there is which renders us obnoxious to the Pains of other Men, causes us to sympathize with them in their Calamities, and which almost comprehends us in their Case.

12 *The Duty of Benevolence and Charity.*

IT is grievous and very uneasy to us, to see or hear, (or even to hear of) any Man, or even of any Animal whatever in Torment. This Compassion appears eminently in them, who *upon other Accounts*, are reckoned among the best of Men, in some Degree it appears almost in all; and Children before they can be induced to it by Arguments, discover an early Propensity of doing Good to others, and a Commiseration of their Uneasiness. And tho' Men by entering into Societies, and by the natural Relations of Father, Son, Brother, and the like, may lay under strong Obligations, and be bound in a closer Union with some Persons, than with the rest of Mankind, yet the primitive Duty of universal Benevolence is not by this destroy'd, but ought, and does still continue in full Force, and we cannot help wishing, even when we have it not in our Power, to help every Object of Misery out of his Distress.

BESIDES, our complying with this Voice of God within us, and lessening the Afflictions of others, gives us the most rational Pleasure and Satisfaction. Relieving the Afflicted, is a most entertaining Employment, and *having done to others, as we would they should do to us*, fits easy upon our Minds. Such Acts of Charity are remembred with Pleasure, and we feast ourselves upon every such charming Reflection. It is at least *equal to*, if not *beyond* the Pleasure of satisfying our natural Appetites of Hunger and Thirst, and this noble Inclination of abating the Miseries of Sorrow, is of itself
a Feast

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 13

a Feast of fat Things. Every Man that hath not cast off his Humanity, must needs think every Opportunity of doing Good to his Fellow-Creatures, far beyond the Pleasure of being Partaker of the most delicious Banquet, and of having been helpful to a distress'd Brother, beyond the short-lived Relish of the most excellent Wine. The Pleasures of the One vanish immediately, and the Appetite is soon cloy'd with them; but doing the Other, yields us a growing Satisfaction upon every Recollection. It is as it were a new Life to us, to think that we were the happy Instruments, under God, of making the Life of one that was in Misery, easy and comfortable to him. The Sensual and Voluptuous heap up Diseases, which oftentimes no Art can cure; whereas the Reflection of having relieved others, is always comfortable. We participate in the Pleasure of those we have assisted, and enjoy not only our own Happiness, but the Happiness of those about us. So that we cannot but approve in our most serious Judgment, every such benevolent Action; our Conscience bearing us witness; and answering upon every Review, *Well done, good and faithful Servant.*

FROM what has been observed, it is manifest that this Duty of Charity and universal Benevolence, is strongly implanted in our Nature, and as St. Paul observes of the Human Body, *that the Members have the same Care one for another. And whether one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it, or one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoice with it.*

AND

14 *The Duty of Benevolence and Charity.*

AND if we, considered *as Men*, have within us this Principle of universal Love, how much rather, *as Christians*, should we be *remarkable* for it, who have the Example of our blessed Lord to copy, and his Precepts to direct us in the Performance of it. Which leads me to the

Second General Head, under which I am to consider the Duty, as it is a principal Doctrine of Christianity, and the distinguishing Mark of our Holy Profession.

THE Disciples of different Sects, are known by some particular Opinions, or circumstantial Behaviour; the *Pharisee* by his Habit and Separation from other Men; the Disciples of the *Baptist*, by the Austerity of their Lives and frequent Fastings; but the *Christian* is to be known by his profound Affection and Love to his Brethren, as he stands bound to this Duty, both by the Example and Precepts of his Saviour Jesus Christ.

IF we first consider his Example, He left the Throne of his Father, and became Partaker of our frail Nature, to save a miserable and lost World. Whilst He conversed amongst Men in the Flesh, He made it his only Business *to go about doing Good*. His Meat and Drink, was to heal the Sick and to cure the Leper, to give Eyes to the Blind and Feet to the Lame, to open the Ears of the Deaf and untye the Tongues of the Dumb, that the One might hear, and the Other declare the wonder-

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 35

wonderful Works of God. Out of his profound Love and Pity, he more than once raised the Dead; and lastly, underwent the most cruel Death of the Cross, to deliver us from the Power and Punishment of Sin, and by his Resurrection, opened to us the Gates of everlasting Life. Certainly then we can never err in setting this most shining Example always before our Eyes, and copying into our Lives those Parts of it, he seemed most industrious to recommend to our Imitation.

AND if we pass from his Example to his Precepts, we cannot but observe the Practice of this Duty to be the chief Condition of our being entitled to that Happiness He came to purchase for us. *Let your Light so shine before Men, saith He, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* That is, let your Actions be such as may cause Men to glorify God, by confessing that the Religion which hath such Effects, must proceed from a good and gracious Author. — *If you keep my Commandments, saith He, John xv. 10. ye shall abide in my Love, even as I have kept my Father's Commandments and abide in his Love.* And again, *John xiii. 34. A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Thus industrious was the beneficent Author of our Salvation to inculcate the Example of his Love upon the Minds of his Disciples, as that which He most of all desired them to imitate him in, and makes it the chief Condition of their continuing in his Love and Favour. He
files

16 *The Duty of Benevolence and Charity.*

stiles it a *New Commandment*, which though different Men interpret differently, yet they all understand it so as to lay some *particular* and more than *ordinary* Obligation upon us. Nay, He makes it the very Badge and Mark of our Profession : *By this shall all Men know that you are my Disciples, if ye love one another.*

THIS is the only Way of proving our Religion to be genuine, and not mere Shew and Appearance. We may pretend to great Devotion and Reverence to God and divine Things ; we may frequent the Places of public Worship ; and we may read, hear and meditate upon God's Word, and yet be far from being truly religious. These are necessary Means indeed of obtaining God's Grace, but yet they are such as may fail of their End, through Mens Lusts and Passions. Every Christian must be holy, good, kind and merciful, after the Example of his blessed Lord and Master : For this is Religion, to be like him whom we worship ; and *he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.*

Once more : Let us observe that this great Christian Duty is of universal Extent, and reaches as far as the Wants of Men. This the Example of our Saviour in the Text, shews us to be our Duty ; *They brought unto him all sick Persons, and all that were taken with divers Diseases and Torments, and he healed them.* And in the Parable of the good Samaritan, He has proved that this Duty should extend to all Persons in want of
our

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 17

our Assistance ; that no Party Distinctions, no difference in Interest or Opinions can excuse us from exercising Offices of Love and Kindness ; that every Object in Misery, is a proper Object of our Charity, and has a lawful Claim to what Relief we can afford him ; and, God forbid a Priest or a Levite *should pass by on the other Side.*

AND tho' we may be liable to be imposed upon by the artificial Pretences of some, which is the only Excuse Persons of Ability can make for neglecting the Practice of this Duty, yet in the Charity now before us, no such thing can possibly happen. However the sturdy Vagabond may pretend himself a Cripple in the Streets, yet he will never for Relief apply himself to be examined by an able Surgeon, when the only thing he fears must be immediately found out — that he is an errant Cheat. Some Sickness may perhaps be so counterfeited, as to deceive the Skilful ; yet no one, I believe, when nothing ails him, will care to go through a Course of Physic, or choose the Regimen of an Hospital. So that whatever is given for this sort of Charity, can hardly ever be thrown away upon *wrong* Objects, it were only to be wished that we were in a Capacity of assisting all *real* ones.

HOWEVER — Thanks be to God who hath given us the Will and the Ability to assist as many as we do. 'Tis true, our House is *small* at present, but who knows how soon our Bounds may be enlarged ? Who knows

18 *The Duty of Benevolence and Charity*

but that some noble Charity may spring from this growing Seed: Who can tell but that some of the Objects we relieve, may hereafter contribute to it: This Charity gives Life and Limbs to many an industrious Person, who may chance to enrich not only his Country, but *himself* too, so as to be able to assist *others* in Return. And who so likely to succour others, as those who have experienced *first* the Want of Assistance, and *then* the Sweetness and Comforts of it? I have heard that in a neighbouring Nation where there is a noble Hospital for Foundling Infants, *this* hath been frequently and remarkably the Case — to the great Emolument of their numerous Poor, and to the no small Improvement and Imbellishment of their Foundation. Such may be the Case of all other Foundations of this Kind, and such may be the Case *with us*. For as a little Evil is frequently productive of more; so — a little Good may, by the Blessing of God upon well-meant Endeavours, perhaps be still more fertile and productive of yet greater Good. Pray God bless our Endeavours, and grant this may be our own Case.

AND now to conclude all. We have been contemplating the divine Power and Goodness of our Lord, thus gloriously display'd in his miraculous Cures. We have seen that nothing surely could either incline or enable him to perform them, but the same Almighty Power and Goodness that first created, and now upholds us every Moment of our Existence. Led by this pleasing Train of Speculation, 'tis natural to a Man to advance
a Step

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 19

a Step farther, and to think with himself, how glorious and ravishing a Sight it must have been to have seen with one's own Eyes, *this Sun of Righteousness arise with Healing in his Wings!* To have beheld the multitude of miserable Objects receiving Health and Strength, Life and Comfort at his Hands! To have seen him with a Word, or Touch, or Look, cooling the burning Fever; chearing the faint and sickly Heart; giving Limbs to the poor and helpless Cripple; presenting the Eyes of the Blind, by Means of one powerful Word, with a sudden and amazing View of the as yet unseen Glories of the Creation; and enabling the Tongue of the Dumb to sing forth the Praises of their heavenly Benefactor! What a Mixture, I say, of Amazement, Love and Gratitude would it raise in the Breast of one of us here present, to have been an Eye-witness of such mighty and miraculous Cures? And how naturally would it make us wish for a like Power of distributing Life and Health to every miserable Object round about us? Thus may we be apt to think, but instead of indulging such vain, but pleasing Thoughts as these, let us spend the present Moments more usefully, by considering, I mean, that if we heartily embrace and practice the Doctrine which our Saviour came to teach us, all this is fully in our Power. It is but looking with an Eye of Faith, of a most rational and well-grounded Faith, and we may *still* see the same common Parent and Guardian of Mankind, daily giving Life and Health to the Sick of every Disease, restoring the crippled Limb, and *making the Bones which were broken to rejoice.*

20 *The Duty of Benevolence and Charity.*

For He still, tho' unseen to the human Eye, continues to controul each Element, and to rule all Nature. The Difference is only this, that whilst He abode with us in the Flesh, Necessity required that He should *miraculously* thwart the Laws of Nature, to apprize us of His divine Authority ; but now, when that Necessity hath been long since ceased, He heals our Pains in another Manner, by giving a Blessing to those natural Means which He ordained at the first Creation. By His Blessing upon our Navigation, He supplies us with every Medicinal Drug that each Clime affords ; and by the same Blessing on the Learning, Care and Industry of the Physician: *The Physician*, lays the Son of *Syrach*, *cutteth off a long Disease*. But then we must beware of the sad Example of King *Asa*, who in *his* Illness *sought unto the Physicians, and not unto the Lord*. No, let us rather be guided by the Son of *Syrach*, who tells us, that though we are indeed to *honour the Physician with the Honour due to him* ; yet, says he, *My Son, in thy Sickness be not negligent ; but pray unto the Lord : Make an Offering unto God, and then give place unto the Physician. For there is a Time, when in their Hand there is good Success ; more especially if they also shall pray unto the Lord, that he would prosper that which they give for Ease and Remedy to prolong Life.* Eccles. xxxviii. Thus doth the Eye of Christian Faith still continue to present us with a View of the Fatherly Care and Tenderneſs of the same God who was *followed by such Multitudes from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.*

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 21

Jordan. The same God *still* continues to lend an Ear to our Cries and Complaints, in all our Pains and Sicknesses ; and when-ever we are restored to Health, 'tis *His* propitious Hand that lifts us up ; 'tis *He* that says, *Arise and sin no more.*

AND as the Sight of these beneficent and mighty Miracles of our Lord, by raising in us the highest Admiration of his Power and Goodness, would naturally make us wish, as I was observing, for a like Power of distributing Life and Health to every miserable Object that is near us ; so give me Leave to remind you, that something like it, is more or less, in every Man's Power. For *the Poor we have always with us*, and God expects it from the Piety of his Church, that as far as our Abilities extend, we should lend our Aid, to strengthen the Infirmities, and supply the Wants of our miserable Fellow-Creatures. And 'tis wise and good in our Creator to lay this Task upon us ; for were He to continue to cure our Diseases in the miraculous Manner recorded in the Text, various Inconveniencies might ensue from it. The active and busy Mind of Man might *then* be withdrawn from cultivating those Arts and Sciences, and from searching into those Secrets of Nature, which do now prove both so agreeable an Entertainment to us, and so evidently display the Wisdom, Power and Glory of God their Author. Nor would *this* be all ; for in that Case, the Dependency of Mankind upon God's Blessing on their own Endeavours, would be quite cut off, and
confe-

22 *The Duty of Benevolence and Charity.*

consequently the Intercourse between the Creator and the Creature would be lessened and impaired. — But above all, were God to set aside all Human Means in the Cure of Wounds and Diseases, he would *then* take away all Occasion of rewarding those who charitably *cure the Broken-hearted, and give Medicine to heal their Sickness.* Let us therefore thankfully embrace every Opportunity of following the Example of him *who went about doing Good; who himself took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickness.* And, give me Leave to say, that the Charity, which now calls us together, is well worthy of our Concern, well calculated to promote the Glory of God, and the Good of Thousands of our Fellow-Creatures, who without the Assistance of you, the noble and charitable Benefactors that support it, must be entirely lost to themselves, to their Families, and to their Country. For notwithstanding the great and well-endow'd Hospitals of this rich and populous City, a sad Experience tells us, that they are yet very unequal to the Want and Necessities of our numerous Poor; thousands of whom must still pine away their miserable Days in Poverty, Pains and Sickness, if not relieved from some other Quarter. And this Charity is still the greater, if we consider the Part of the City 'tis fixed in; being in a Neighbourhood, at a Distance from other Hospitals or Infirmaryes, but abounding with a numerous and industrious Poor: Particularly, Mariners disabled in the Merchants Service, (and for whom the Public has yet made no Provision) together with an Infinity of poor Manufacturers

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity. 23

facturers of various Occupations ; Multitudes of whom are by divers Accidents, disabled from earning that Bread for which they are willing to labour. Such as these are worthy Objects of a Christian Charity ; which cannot fail of drawing down God's Blessing upon our Country in general, and upon each noble and generous Benefactor in particular. May God Almighty reward *your Work and Labour of Love*, and open the Hearts of *others*, to imitate *your* generous, good and laudable Example. May your Love and Kindness be rewarded here on Earth with that greatest of all Blessings — that happy Fore-taste of celestial Bliss — the Testimony of a good Conscience. May it sweeten (in your last Hour) each bitter Pang of Death ; and open to you a sure and pleasant Passage to that gracious Call, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World. For I was an Hungred, and ye gave me Meat, I was Thirsty, and ye gave me Drink, I was a Stranger, and ye took me in ; Naked, and ye Cloathed me ; I WAS SICK, AND YE VISITED ME.*

F I N I S.

The Duty of Benevolence and Charity

...of various Occupations: Millions of whom
 are by their Acquirements, disabled from earning their
 bread for which they are willing to labour. Such are
 the worthy Objects of a Christian's Charity; which
 cannot fail of drawing down God's Blessing upon our
 Country in general, and upon each noble and generous
 Liberator in particular. May God Almighty reward
 our Wishes and Labours of Love, and open the Heavens
 in answer to imitate your generous and laudable
 Example. May your Love and Kindness be rewarded
 here on Earth with that growth of all Blessings —
 that happy Fortitude of eternal Life — the Fellowship
 of a good Conscience. May it prosper in your
 Heart, each your House of Devotion; and open to you a
 safe and pleasant Passage to that glorious Call. Come
 to the Aid of my Father, in the Kingdom of Heaven.
 I am, Sir, your humble Servant, and your Obedient Son,
 John, and so gave the King the Order of the Bath.
 I was given, AND YE VISITED ME.



W I V I